



### **Let Us Run With Perseverance**

Hello dear friends, I hope that you are all well and staying safe. I want you to know how proud I am of all of you for your perseverance during this time. You have been so faithful in worshiping together every Sunday, and it makes my heart light to see all of your comments and words of encouragement every week.

Another great source of encouragement during this trying time is, of course, the Bible. A great deal of the New Testament was written to Christians who were experiencing hardship. One of my favorite words of encouragement comes from the Epistle to the Hebrews. We aren't sure who wrote Hebrews, as the author does not identify themselves in the book, but we do know that whoever wrote it was an incredibly gifted writer. We see this gift on full display when the author encourages their readers to keep the faith in a time of persecution.

Beginning in chapter 11 we see what "keeping the faith" really means. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible."

The author then begins a series of stories about the great patriarchs of our faith and how they endured difficult times, but remained faithful to God. Stories of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, David, Samuel, and the prophets. The author tells of how these heroes of faith "conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment."

Finally, the author concludes what we can learn from all of these stories of God's people enduring suffering for the sake of their faith: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart."

Today I echo the author of Hebrews to you: since we are surrounded by the saints of God, who are cheering us on at every turn, let us persevere during this time of difficulty. Let us not forget that every great person of faith had obstacles to overcome. Let us remember also that our Lord Jesus Christ himself suffered tremendously, and in doing so he conquered sin and death. Let us keep the faith as they did, and let us not grow weary or lose heart.

## July 5th—Worship in the Sanctuary

...but only if you feel comfortable coming. If nothing changes, We will open up the sanctuary for worship on July 5th, only at 11:00 a.m. with several restrictions using the CDC and the Bishops recommendations.

- Everyone must wear a mask while in the church building. *Masks will be available to anyone who does not have one.*
- Individuals (or family units) must remain 6 feet apart.
- There will not be any congregational singing.
- Please do not arrive early or stay late for visiting. If you visit in the parking lot, we recommend you remain 6 feet apart.
- *Friendly reminder:* Please regard the taped off areas when you arrive.
- Although bathrooms will be available, please use the bathroom before you arrive.
- We will not serve coffee and donuts.

## TITHES & OFFERINGS...

Mail your checks to SSUMC, 319 N. Main St. in Sand Springs, OK 74063 or give online at:

<https://sandspringsumc.org/>

Click on the "Giving" link in the top right hand corner and fill out the information and click "Continue."

## KIDZONE NEWS

Hey Kids! We all hope you are staying well, staying entertained, and since you're stuck at home, we hope you are helping around the house. We miss you all so much and look forward to when we can be together again. Because of the risks, we decided it would be in everyone's best interest to cancel Vacation Bible School this year. We will come up with some fun things for you to do and you can look forward to some activities when you come to church starting July 5th. See you soon!



Ms. Marty & Ms. Debbie

### "The Prayer Box"

Max & Sharon Schuermann, Philip Comer, Sylvia Johnson, Ralph & Roberta Rand, June Brown, Shawn Cole, Martha Scudder, Betty & Linda Lund, Wava Burt, Ralph Ward, Bob Hula, Gordonna Fisher, Jim & Vi McAllister, Barbara McClintock, Montie & Betty Box, Bruce Warren, Maureen Gibson, and Last Week's Prayer Chains & Unspoken Requests

## FIND 16 DIFFERENCES

